

Norfolk CAMHS Strategic Partnership (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and Healthy Norfolk Schools

Quality Assurance Checklist for Norfolk schools recruiting Counsellors to work in schools.

Spring 2015

Introduction:

The Healthy Schools Team and colleagues in Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are often asked by Head Teachers how Counsellors can be safely recruited to work within our schools in Norfolk. On occasions we become aware of situations where children and young people may have been put at risk because of inappropriate interventions from therapists not suitably qualified or experienced to be working in schools. As a result we have compiled a checklist of considerations that will help schools implement a quality assured service from a therapist.

Schools that wish to employ a counsellor are recommended to follow this guidance. It is important that there is clarity on the part of all staff about the role of the Counsellor. This might be achieved by the Counsellor having an opportunity to talk to staff at a staff meeting.

Referral to the Counsellor should always be a considered response by senior staff and should never be a routine measure taken by class teachers in response to misbehaviour by pupils

We have listed below all of the elements that we believe to be “Best Practice” to provide a checklist for schools to use when recruiting counsellors or other therapists. Where CAMH services are commissioned locally these principles will underpin any commissioned service.

What do we mean by Counsellors?

An accredited counsellor is one who is registered through a professional body, adheres to their code of practice, and is overseen by that body and disciplined if they fail to conform to its requirements. BACP (The British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists) and UKCP (The UK Council for Psychotherapy) are the main organisations for Counsellors and Psychotherapists. At the moment, this remains a voluntary process as the government has not taken forward statutory regulation, moving instead to a system of Assured Voluntary Registration.

Both of the above organisations have registers that can be searched to check the accreditation/registration status of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

Why it is important to have a quality assured therapist working in school

There are clear reasons for providing a quality assured service within schools:

- To safeguard our children and young people from harm and /or abuse
- To enable children and young people to have a positive experience of accessing emotional health support
- To ensure that where a mental health issue is identified there is a clear pathway for them to access appropriate support through the Norfolk CAMHS system

It would be good practice to ensure that information about what the school is offering is communicated to all governors, staff, parents and carers.

Quality Assurance Checklist for schools recruiting Counsellors

The following should be seriously considered before any therapy is put in place within schools for children and young people:

Therapist qualifications:

1. Is the therapist currently registered with a relevant Professional body? (BACP / UKCP)

It is essential for schools to obtain and copy evidence of registration and ensure it is up to date.

☐

Clinical Supervision:

2. Is regular and appropriate clinical supervision in place which meets all the requirements of the relevant professional body?

☐

3. Have you confirmed that the Clinical Supervisor has the relevant supervision qualifications and experience of work with children and young people?

☐

**** There should be a supervision contract in place between the schools and the Supervisor.
See Appendix B for example.**

Safeguarding:

4. Is there an up to date enhanced DBS check in place for the therapist?

☐

Schools should ensure they have obtained and copied evidence of this DBS check.

5. Has the therapist undertaken relevant Safeguarding training? (Updated within the last 3 years)

☐

6. Do you have clear systems in place for any therapist recruited to understand and comply with your school's Safeguarding Policy and procedures?

☐

It is essential that schools should explicitly discuss the professional boundaries and expectations of the school with the counsellor.

Confidentiality:

7. Is there a clear policy for children and young people accessing therapy around confidentiality?

☐

8. Are there clear protocols in place for ensuring this is understood and shared appropriately across the school?

☐

Insurance:

9. Do self employed therapists have adequate insurance cover in place?
(£5 million Public Liability and £5 million professional indemnity cover)

☐

Parental Consent:

10. Do you have a clear process in place for obtaining parental consent?

(Young people are able to access counselling independently if considered "Fraser-competent"
(sometimes still referred to as "Gillick-competent")

☐

Risk Management:

11. Is there a clear system of continuous and recorded risk-assessment in place for each pupil obtaining counselling?

☐

12. Are there protocols in place for sharing and/or escalating concerns about a child or young person's mental health both within the school and beyond (accessing CAMH services)?

☐**Environment:**

13. Has an appropriate room been allocated for the therapy to take place in?

☐

14. Does the room protect the safety of the child or young person and the therapist?

☐**Referral Policy:**

15. Is there a clear referral policy in place within the school for how young people can access the therapy?

☐

(It is strongly advised that the number of sessions available to a young person should be time or session limited. If a young person has complex needs and requires longer term therapy this is likely to become the remit of a core CAMH Service.)

Monitoring and Evaluation:

16. How will issues being presented in counselling sessions be fed back into school management (policy revision, curriculum planning, pastoral support) without breaching individual confidentiality?

☐

17. What monitoring and evaluation will take place to show the school is getting value for money?

☐**Other things to consider:**

18. How many sessions will be available to children and a young person i.e. is it open ended?

☐

19. If there is insufficient funding to continue the service how will children and young people accessing it be supported? ☐
20. A clear individualised plan needs to be in place for each pupil identifying their needs and potential risks through the holidays and stating how these will be met. ☐
21. How will children and young people be prioritised in the event of a waiting list? ☐
22. Is there a clear protocol in place should a young person wish to make a complaint about the therapist? ☐
23. How will complaints be dealt with? ☐
24. How will the therapist be involved in Integrated Practice i.e. involvement in Early Help? ☐
25. How many hours a week does the counsellor work face-to-face? (20 hrs a week is maximum BACP recommendation) ☐

Appendix A

What is therapy?

Counselling

The British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy definition of counselling

Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in a private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty the client is having, distress they may be experiencing or perhaps their dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. It is always at the request of the client as no one can properly be 'sent' for counselling. By listening attentively and patiently the counsellor can begin to perceive the difficulties from the client's point of view and can help them to see things more clearly, possibly from a different perspective. Counselling is a way of enabling choice or change or of reducing confusion. It does not involve giving advice or directing a client to take a particular course of action. Counsellors do not judge or exploit their clients in any way.

In the counselling sessions the client can explore various aspects of their life and feelings, talking about them freely and openly in a way that is rarely possible with friends or family. Bottled up feelings such as anger, anxiety, grief and embarrassment can become very intense and counselling offers an opportunity to explore them, with the possibility of making them easier to understand. The counsellor will encourage the expression of feelings and as a result of their training will be able to accept and reflect the client's problems without becoming burdened by them.

Acceptance and respect for the client are essentials for a counsellor and, as the relationship develops, so too does trust between the counsellor and client, enabling the client to look at many aspects of their life, their relationships and themselves which they may not have considered or been able to face before. The counsellor may help the client to examine in detail the behaviour or situations which are proving troublesome and to find an area where it would be possible to initiate some change as a start. The counsellor may help the client to look at the options open to them and help them to decide the best for them.

Models of counselling

Although there is considerable consensus about the core content of a counselling course, there are nevertheless distinct methods of counselling. Most courses start from a theoretical base - typically humanistic, psychodynamic, cognitive or behavioural. Before enrolling on a course it is advisable to be aware of its theoretical emphasis and what that means in terms of the learning experience offered and the skills acquired.

<http://www.bacp.co.uk/education/whatiscounselling.html>
<http://www.psychotherapy.org.uk/>

For further information about Norfolk CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services)
http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/Childrens_services/Practitioners/Child_and_adolescent_mental_health_services/index.htm

Appendix B Model of a supervision contract.

Supervisor's Contract

Supervisor's name and address.....

This contract is effective from.....

It engages the supervisor to provide casework supervision under the terms and conditions outlined below. The contract should be read along with the background information and guidance notes. If you have any queries about the contract please contact:

.....

Under the terms of this contract supervisors are required to:

- 1. Carry out their responsibilities in a professional manner and in accordance with the best interests of
.....School**

Supervisors are key partners in ensuring the maintenance of professional standards. Supervisors are responsible not only to the clients and the supervisee, but ultimately to the school for the work, and are expected to work in accordance with the best interests of the school.

- 2. Provide evidence of their skill/experience/qualifications specifically related to therapeutic work with young people**

- 3. Offer regular supervision at a time and venue mutually agreed between themselves and the counsellor.**

The regularity of the sessions will depend on the counsellor's ongoing caseload in accordance with ethical and professional guidelines. In exceptional circumstances, the school may agree to offer increased supervision to an individual for a specified period

of time, but this must be formally agreed in advance. In the event that a supervisor needs to take unplanned leave, such that the supervision arrangements will be interrupted, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to letknow. Current BACP guidelines stipulate a minimum of 1.5 hours of supervision per Month.

4. Maintain records of supervision sessions.

Supervisors are expected to maintain records of attendance for supervision sessions, which should be made available to the school annually.

5. Submit monthly invoices for payment.

..... will pay supervisors up to £..... an hour for sessions. **Invoices should include the name of the counsellor supervised, dates of sessions attended, and a note of sessions missed or cancelled by the counsellor.**

Supervisors are considered to be self-employed, and are responsible for all income tax liabilities and National Insurance or similar contributions in respect of their fees. Supervisors agree to indemnify in respect of any claim made by the relevant authorities against in respect of any of the above relating to the supervisor's services under this agreement.

6. Have adequate insurance cover.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that they have adequate professional indemnity insurance to cover their work with

7. Abide by the school's safeguarding and confidentiality policies

It is essential that all supervisors have read and understood these policies.

8. Abide by the school's guidelines, policies and procedures

A copy of the school's guidelines, policies and procedures will be supplied.

9. Work in accordance with an appropriate professional code of ethics for supervisors

Termination of this Contract

This contract may be terminated by a minimum of one month's notice on either side, although as much notice as possible would be appreciated to ensure that supervision relationships are appropriately ended and arrangements made to ensure that workers are not left without casework supervision.

.....may terminate this contract immediately in writing if, in’s opinion:

- 1) the supervisor is in breach of the terms of this agreement and has not made provision to remedy that breach to the satisfaction of the agency

OR

- 2) the supervisor is deemed to be incompetent, guilty of gross misconduct and/or persistently negligent in respect of their obligations under this contract.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR.....

I have read and agree to abide by the terms of the contract outlined above in the provision of the following supervision hours (excluding holidays) :

SIGNED

DATE.....

SIGNED

on behalf of(school)

DATE.....